



MT. CULMEN CLARION

A Newsletter of Mt. Culmen EC Church

*"What I tell you in the dark, say in the light;
and what you hear whispered, shout from the rooftops!"*

Volume 6 - Issue 6 - June 2023

Pastor

Rev. Jonathan J. Brown
717-205-6532

Lay Delegate

Rebekah Brown

Alternate Lay Delegate

Kenneth Bannon

Board President

Floyd Mast

Board Vice President

Delrea Ream

Board Secretary

Sharon Mast

Church Treasurer

Esther Stauffer

Trustees:

Floyd Mast
Barry Ream
David Rissler
Ian Pammer

Stewards:

Esther Stauffer
Joyce Garber
Kim Sweigart
Brenna Pammer

Members-at-Large:

Sharon Mast
Delrea Ream



Strangers, Sacrifices, and Sides

— Rev. Jonathan Brown

In our ongoing study through the Book of Numbers together, we left off last month with chapter 14. On the border of their promised land, the twelve tribes of Israel each sent a representative to go scout the land and report back. When they did, all agreed on many good things. But a majority of the scouts (ten) spread a message of panic; only the other two (Joshua and Caleb) urged Israel toward a confident faith. In terror, Israel had voted to replace Moses with a new leader to take them back to Egypt. As a result, God banned that whole generation from entering the promised land. Instead, he commanded them to withdraw into the desert, to live and die as nomads. Hearing this, and consumed with regret, Israel suddenly did an about-face and tried to invade the very land they'd feared, thinking now they could seize it without God's blessing. Predictably, it went... badly.

When chapter 15 picks up, you might find it a bit... odd. Because, after all of that, you'd expect almost anything except what God actually says. Wrecking the narrative flow, God starts giving Moses new laws – laws that seem to be completely unrelated to anything we just read about! What *on earth* is the Bible doing? What's even the point of this chapter?

Well, think for a moment about what it must have been like to be an Israelite right then and there. After despairing of ever entering the promised land, you or one of your strong family members switched into presumption, tried to invade the land, and got killed trying or else barely survived. This was a psychological roller coaster. Your insufficiencies just got laid bare for all to see. What you just experienced seems like proof that Israel has no future – certainly not in the land of Canaan, whose inhabitants just effortlessly tossed you back out on your backside! No doubt it's back to despair mode again. There's no hope!

But then God gives Moses a message. It doesn't *directly* address your despair. But these are new laws, and they've got something in common: they only take effect "*when you come into the land of your settlement, which I am giving you*" (Numbers 15:2) – "*when you come into the land to which I bring you*" (Numbers 15:19). God subtly reasserts his continuing promise: I am giving you the land, I am bringing you into it, despite the delay. And specifically, these laws will apply only after Israel is settled in the land – not just roaming here and there, fighting for their lives, but actually able to put down roots, just as God had promised long ago to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These laws get triggered only once God wins you the victory! And so God legislates matter-of-factly. He takes the validity of his age-old promises as a starting point. Not a thing God says in Number 15 makes a lick of sense unless God is going to be true to his word!

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Mount Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church

1885 Turkey Hill Road, East Earl, PA 17519

Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00 AM



Please visit us online at
facebook.com/MtCulmenEC

Board Meeting Notes (May 2023)

Last month, the Official Board of Mt. Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church convened its meeting after the worship service on Sunday, May 7, 2023, to conduct the business of the church. In attendance at the meeting were 12 of the 13 members of our church board: Floyd Mast, Sharon Mast, Del Ream, Barry Ream, Kim Sweigart, Esther Stauffer, Joyce Garber, Ian Pammer, Brenna Pammer, Ken Bannon, Rev. Jonathan Brown, and Rebekah Brown.

Opening with prayer and roll call, the board heard the customary reports.

Of these, the treasurer's report submitted by Esther Stauffer noted:

- April 2023 income of \$7,318.05, of which \$1,615.05 was from the pancake breakfast
- April 2023 expenses of \$5,071.15
- a April 30 ending balance of \$11,126.10

The secretary's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Kim Sweigart, seconded by Del Ream.

The treasurer's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Del Ream, seconded by Ken Bannon.

The stewards had nothing to report at this time.

The trustees had a number of items to report. First, with respect to the upcoming project of replacing the lights in the fellowship hall, Floyd Mast reported that he had found a different, cheaper sort of light (\$91.49/ea), of which he projected 16 units would be required. He said that he and Ian Pammer would install one as a test, and that if it would be bright enough, perhaps fewer lights would be required. Floyd expressed an intention to carry out this test light installation on the morning of Saturday, May 13, 2023, so as to have it completed prior to the Caernarvon Township Church Tour's visit to our church / fellowship hall. (*N.B.: This test installation was delayed and remains pending.*)

Second, following up on discussions around the possible sale of some church woodland, Floyd reported that he had spoken to John K. Roche of Vision Engineering, Inc., of Lititz, of which Caernarvon Township is a municipal client. He informed us that, even with separate deeds, there would need to be a subdivision drawing, which would require the services of an engineer. This could take 3-6 weeks to accomplish. Should we do this, if it's reasonable in expense? So too, we would need to determine a fair price for the acre of church land under consideration. Floyd reported that the trustees are consulting realtors to gain a sense of the value of the land first. He expressed hope that this information would be available soon.

Third, Floyd reported that we had received another telephone call about a particular tree on our church property which has been cracked about 6-8 feet up its backside. He laid plans for a weekday morning in the week following the board meeting for several of the church's retired men to gather together, cut down the tree, and haul it away in pieces. (*N.B.: This was then done on the morning of Wednesday, May 10, 2023; for pictures, please see next page.*)

Fourth, Barry Ream reported that some treatments had taken place in the basement-level church office, which had an infection of mold. He believed that the mold's growth had been arrested and that the room now feels drier.

Under the heading of old business, the board took up a few items held over from previous meetings. First, the board discussed the still-upcoming soup sale / yard sale event set for Saturday, June 17, 2023. Rebekah Brown reported that she had updated our advertisement for review by the board, to which no objections were voiced (*for this ad, see page 8*). Esther Stauffer said that she would confer with Yvonne Styer the next Sunday, May 14, to begin preparing for the yard sale aspect, and that Yvonne planned to send invitation cards to the sellers from our prior yard sale event. As to the soup sale aspect, Del inquired whether else we would be selling besides soup. The board determined to sell hot dogs, ham-and-cheese sandwiches, chips, and bottled water as well.

Second, Rebekah Brown noted that she had purchased and donated two new corkboards – one for the church bulletin board, the other for the community bulletin board – and that they would now need to be put up. Floyd Mast said that he would do so after the cracked tree had been felled. (*N.B.: These bulletin boards are now up and active.*)

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(Continued from Page 2, "Board Meeting Notes")

Under the heading of new business, the board briefly discussed care of the church cemetery, as we had been notified by some concerned parties about small items that had gone missing, such as a small flag. Discussion cleared any fear that things had been damaged by the lawncare process, but it was less clear what items had blown away or what items had been illicitly removed by parties unknown. The board's consensus was to keep watching the cemetery.

There being no further business after that, on motion of Barry Ream, as seconded by Kim Sweigart, the board adjourned its meeting, to reconvene following the worship service on **Sunday, June 4, 2023**.

Thanks to those who were able on May 10 to assist with felling the damaged tree, as seen below.



(Continued from Page 1, "Strangers, Sacrifices, and Sides")

So what do these laws say? First, they regulate Israel's (future) life of sacrifice. Specifically, God first talks about the non-atoning sacrifices of land animals (15:1-13). Once Israel is settled enough to engage in agriculture and viticulture, God expects that even Israel's voluntary offerings won't be purely meat-based. Instead, each animal has a corresponding amount of flour, oil, and wine that's to accompany it. Want to offer God a lamb? You'll need to join to it a tenth of an *ephah* of flour mixed with a quarter *hin* of oil, plus a quarter *hin* of wine (15:4-5). (Estimates of an *ephah* and a *hin* vary, but even a minimal guess has a lamb accompanied by about eight cups of flour, a quart of oil, and a quart of wine.) For a ram, bigger than a lamb, it's a fifth of an *ephah* of flour, a third of a *hin* of oil, and a third of a *hin* of wine (15:6-7). And for a bull, it's three-tenths of an *ephah* of flour, a half *hin* of oil, and a half *hin* of wine (15:8-10). The amounts escalate from little lamb to bulky bull, but the flour amount triples while the oil and wine – which always match each other – only double. Think of these things as like side dishes.

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Caernarvon Township Church Tour

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, the Caernarvon Township Historical Society, presided over by our own Yvonne Styer, organized a bus tour to twelve local churches: Churchtown United Methodist Church, Churchtown (Old Order) Mennonite Church, Churchtown (BMA) Mennonite Church, Conestoga Mennonite Church, Twin Valley Bible Chapel, California EC Church, our Mt. Culmen EC Church, Lichty's Mennonite Church, Bridgeville EC Church, Bangor Episcopal Church, and Bethel Christian Fellowship. The visit to our church was timed so that the tour group could enjoy a lunch in our fellowship hall catered by Esther Stauffer and Amy Hanna. Below, please see a few of the photographs that Yvonne took during our segment of the tour. During the tour's visit at Mt. Culmen, Pastor Jonathan gave a short presentation on our church and its history, which you may read on the three pages that follow.



A Historical Sketch of Mt. Culmen

[The following is the presentation on the history of Mt. Culmen that Pastor Jonathan delivered on May 13, 2023, to the participants in the Caernarvon Township Church Tour. The text has been slightly amended in a few spots.]

Our story begins with a Lancaster County tile-maker named Jacob Albright, raised a Lutheran, later a Methodist, as he believes he hears God calling him for a special purpose: to go spread a gospel message of rebirth to his German-speaking brethren of Pennsylvania and beyond. In 1816, eight years after Albright's death from tuberculosis at age 49, those he'd organized adopted the name *die Evangelische Gemeinschaft*, or 'the Evangelical Association.' Meanwhile, here on Turkey Hill, Lutheran pastors from Berks County had been traveling through the area, preaching revival in local barns, so that, over time, a stable congregation had begun to form. Yet at some point, around 1861, the little congregation up here on Turkey Hill opted to join this burgeoning Evangelical Association that Albright had started. And so the Turkey Hill church was born anew.

Soon afterwards, the church's three trustees – William Schnader, John Brown, and John Ammon – settled a deal to buy for \$12 a modest piece of land down the road from here; and on it, they built a small red-sandstone chapel, referred to by the January 1864 deed as the “Mount Culmin Meeting House” of the “Evangelical Association Church.” The conventional record of Evangelical pastors serving this church goes back to 1862, and assumes that the church was at first included in what was called the Fairville Station, alongside our church in Terre Hill. *If* that's true, then among the first pastors of Mount Culmen was Elisha Albright Hoffman, who – years after his possible service with us – went on to write hymns such as “Are You Washed in the Blood?” and “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms.” Those first decades saw Mount Culmen often bounced back and forth between the Fairville Station and the Conestoga Circuit, whose pastors might walk over a dozen miles each Sunday to cover their territory.

The early 1890s brought an ugly split in the Evangelical Association, largely due to conflict between two bishops – John Jacob Esher and Rudolph Dubs – spiraling out of control. And in October 1894, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that the majority 'Esherite' faction were the legal owner of all the church buildings. The Turkey Hill congregation – Mount Culmen – was exclusively made up of the minority group, the 'Dubsites,' and so they had to close their church doors. The building stayed empty – there was no Esherite congregation around – and the people moved into the Smoketown schoolhouse for the next year and a half until, in March 1896, the minority group – now reorganized under the name of 'United Evangelical Church' – could buy back the Turkey Hill property, and three other Conestoga Circuit church properties, for \$900. Then, only then, could we move back in.

In 1912, the Conestoga Circuit was split into the Pequea Mission and the Bridgeville Mission. (You tour-goers have already visited one other Bridgeville Mission church today (California), you're in one now (Mt. Culmen), and of course you've got Bridgeville itself yet to go this afternoon. But then the ('Dubsite') United Evangelical Church was sharply divided yet again over the question of whether to bury the hatchet and re-merge with the ('Esherite') Evangelical Association, now that Bishops Esher and Dubs (and most of the other driving personalities of the 1890s split) were dead. Those who said yes to reunification have since become United Methodists (since in 1946, the reunited Evangelical Church merged with the United Brethren to become the Evangelical United Brethren, and in 1968, the Evangelical United Brethren merged with the Methodists to become the United Methodist Church). But those who said no to reunification had to take up yet another new name in 1928: the Evangelical Congregational Church. The worshippers at Mount Culmen all said no to the remerger, and still bear the EC name today.

Visitors during the Second World War observed that the people of Mount Culmen, who held services every other Sunday afternoon, were “thoughtful in temperament, undistracted by the noise and turmoil of this age, and deeply concerned for the religious welfare of our American youth.” Following the war's conclusion, they briefly shut down their “quaint old stone church” to re-roof and repaint it in 1948, and added a new vestibule in '55. But by that time, the people had been growing through annual revivals and everyday faithfulness, and so the late fifties found them feeling constrained by their modest building. “The old church in which this congregation worshipped since 1862,” they reflected in retrospect, “had become far too small and too inadequate to perform the kind of ministry that the community had a right to expect.”

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So, early in 1957, the people of Mount Culmen toyed with the idea of expanding their little sandstone building. But their inaction on the thought gave way to new ideas in dialogue with Bishop John Adams Smith, an Akron native. The EC church up in Robesonia, Berks County, had dwindled to only four adult members, and when two of them had moved out of town, that church had little choice but to close and leave their property – land, building, furniture, all of it – in the hands of the East Pennsylvania Conference, which was then responsible for its care and disposal. But *what if* that church building could just be *picked up* and given to this more vibrant congregation elsewhere who could get more use out of it? Was such a thing even possible?

The Mount Culmen trustees voted yes in November 1958 on accepting the Robesonia church and its furnishings. The Conference then, in April 1959, approved the transfer for a token sum: one dollar. (Of course, Mt. Culmen gave an extra hundred as a grateful love offering.) The deal was signed in July '59, with a deadling for moving the church by the end of November. Meanwhile, Mt. Culmen enlisted Mohnton architect Harry G. Mohn to draw up plans for their new church building, based very closely on his study of the Robesonia church's layout.

Now, all this time, the original idea was to tear down the old Mt. Culmen church and just put up the new one in its place, on the same land. But by August 1959, it was clear that the old land simply wouldn't do to accommodate the new church. So God provided. Two years earlier, a local Mennonite minister, Rev. Harry R. Lichty, had suddenly suffered a fatal stroke behind his pulpit at Martindale Mennonite Church. During this time, Mt. Culmen EC Church was part of a two-point charge with our EC church in Martindale, meaning that Mt. Culmen's pastor certainly knew Rev. Lichty. And since Rev. Lichty and his wife Ethel had no children, Mrs. Lichty was willing to sell a little over one-and-a-quarter acres of Lichty family land to the Mt. Culmen congregation for only \$500. This land was only a little distance down the street from where the Mt. Culmen church originally was; you're on that new land now.

The sale agreement was signed in September 1959, with excavation by A. R. Reifsnnyder starting immediately. Work then proceeded under general contractor Aaron Witmer, with a number of local specialists – like electrician Robert Cover, plumber Carl Musser, plasterer Earl Martin, and plenty of others – on the job. And that's not even to mention the large amounts of donated labor. Even Bishop Emeritus John Adams Smith and Pastor William Conrad Detterline pitched in with their own hands on the job of dismantling the Robesonia church and putting up a Mt. Culmen church.

By April 1960, our district superintendent (and future bishop) Paul Kreidler Cressman reported that, although the task of dismantling a church building piece by piece to move it involved "some obvious waste," nevertheless "many valuable parts of the old structure were salvaged and adopted for, or adapted to, useful places in the new building." Thanks to the ensuing low material cost, the church went into only \$25,000 of debt. From among the original financial contributors to the project from within the congregation itself, one – Barton Messner – is with us still today.

The resulting church building was a bit over 36 by 55 feet, and its white concrete-block exterior housed a main floor containing this main auditorium (meant to seat 150) and a Sunday School room (meant to seat 100) over to your right, separated by a folding wall; while the basement held a general purpose room suitable for cooking, some classrooms, bathrooms, a cloak room, and a boiler room. The cross in the bell tower, not part of the architect's original sketches, would be lit up overnight to shine the sign of Jesus down through the valley for miles, visible as far as Churchtown. They called it "a dream come true."

This church was dedicated on Sunday afternoon, June 26, 1960, by Bishop Harold Hallman Scanlin and all the people there assembled – which was a lot of people! The attendance exceeded 450, with many packed into the basement or participating from the parking lot by listening over the loudspeakers. The dedication week's nightly worship services lasted through the night before Independence Day. Now settled into their new building, the Mt. Culmen congregation kept title to their old buiding and old land for four more years before selling it to Denton and Leah McClure. Having passed through a number of intervening hands, the original church's exterior still stands today, containing a little guesthouse, the Mt. Culmen Cottage, just west from us along Turkey Hill Road.

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(Continued from Page 6, "Historical Sketch of Mt. Culmen")

Four years later, in March 1968, we bought the woodlands behind us, again from Ethel Lichty. Yet, in spite of that added expenditure, by April 1972 we were able to burn the mortgage, having paid off all our debts. We also built our fellowship hall. Not only would the basement then be reorganized, but the main-floor Sunday School room here would disappear, with its divider being used to create the fellowship hall's bathroom.

In time, Mt. Culmen ceased to be classified as a mission church, ceased to be coupled with Martindale, and has sought to pursue ministry on and from Turkey Hill by serving the East Earl and Caernarvon Township areas in what ways we can. Through a number of pastorates, and some up-and-down seasons, we've striven to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, pleading his light to fill first our own hearts and then shining his light through the land by faith, hope, and love. I hope this brief story I've told you has interested and informed you. Please feel free to look around our building, and the tables in the fellowship hall where we've laid out copies of some documents from our church's history. Thank you all very much, and God bless you.

Statistical Report (April 2023)

<u>Worship Service Attendance</u>		<u>Offerings Received</u>
04/02/23	32	\$1,244.00
04/09/23	33	\$637.00
04/16/23	34	\$1,292.00
04/23/23	30	\$1,455.00
<u>04/30/23</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>\$825.00</u>
Average:	31	Total: \$5,453.00

<u>Birthdays (June 2023)</u>			<u>Anniversaries (June 2023)</u>
6/4 – Pauline Good	6/5 – Luke Karol (Yvonne Styer's grandson)	6/14 – Ian Pammer	6/14 – Ken and Yvonne Styer
6/15 – Kenneth Ault Jr.	6/16 – Tylyn Kern (Barb Kern's granddaughter)	6/22 – Bob Snader	6/17 – Leon and Jean Hess
6/28 – David Rissler	6/29 – Earl Good		6/30 – John and Kim Sweigart

(Continued from Page 3, "Strangers, Sacrifices, and Sides")

The next section of law God gives is about the inclusion of foreign-residents (*gerim*) in the sacrificial life of God's people. *Gerim* – 'strangers' or 'sojourners,' your Bible might say – were outsiders, non-natives, not descended from Jacob's sons. They might be passing through, visiting, or even move in, though they'd be landless and vulnerable, much as the Hebrews had been as *gerim* in Egypt (Exodus 23:9). Israel was commanded that they should treat their *gerim* with love, as members of their civic community, and give them equal protection under the law (Leviticus 19:33-34). *Gerim* had to obey some of Israel's laws, such as observing the sabbath (Leviticus 16:29), obeying the sexual laws (Leviticus 18:26), and not committing crimes like violence (Leviticus 24:22), child sacrifice (Leviticus 20:2), consuming blood (Leviticus 17:12), or blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16).

Here, God teaches that the *gerim*, as foreign residents, had equal access to the benefits of the system of atonement God gave Israel. If the community as a whole committed a sin, and the high priest made a sacrifice to atone for that communal sin, then the forgiveness would extend to the *gerim*, too (Numbers 15:22-26). And even if a *ger* sinned against God's will, they had the exact same path toward atonement and forgiveness that any Israelite had: they could bring a sacrifice of atonement to their local priest (Numbers 15:27-29). Other than that, though, the *gerim* – being outside the covenant – weren't obligated to observe Israel's feasts or participate in the *qahal*, the worship assembly of Israel. But here God says that, *if they wanted to*, they could join the feasts or bring him sacrifices of thanksgiving or free-will offerings or any of the other stuff – on the same terms as any native Israelite (Numbers 15:14-16).

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Soup Sale and Community Yard Sale



When:

**Saturday, June 17, 2023
8am - 1pm**



Where:

**Mt. Culmen EC Church
1885 Turkey Hill Road
East Earl, PA**

Annual Soup Sale
(8am until Sold Out)

COMMUNITY YARD SALE

Food items sold out of fellowship hall

Cold soups, including:

- Chicken Corn Noodle
- Ham and Bean
- Chili
- Vegetable
- Pastor's Special

Pints: \$3.50

Quarts: \$7.00

Other items for sale:

- Baked Goods
- Ham & Cheese Sandwiches
- Hot Dogs & Chips

Food sales by cash or card (credit/debit)
Yard sales by cash only

Spaces for rent:

- \$10 space in our fellowship hall
 - Table is provided
- \$5 space in pavilion or on lawn
 - Bring your own table; or, rent one for an additional \$5

Tables and spaces are limited, so call
Yvonne Styer to reserve your space today!

(717) 445-5040

We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Church Events

- **Caernarvon Township Church Tour** – On Saturday, **June 17**, 2023, we'll have our next soup sale / yard sale event! For more information, please see preceding page.

Upcoming Community Events

- **Terre Hill Breakfast and Yard Sale** – On Saturday, **June 3**, 2023, beginning at 7:00am, the Terre Hill Park (210 Lancaster Avenue, Terre Hill) will be the site for breakfast in the park pavilion (until 10:00am or sold out) and then shop at a fine yard sale! Yard sale spaces (\$5/each) will line the park driveway.
- **Strawberry Festival** – Also on Saturday, **June 3**, 2023, plus on Saturday, **June 10**, 2023, from 8:00am to 4:00pm, Brecknock Orchard (390 Orchard Road, Mohnnton) will host a strawberry festival. Pick your own strawberries, watch apple cider donuts being made, plant your own planters (\$16), sample beef from Stone Ridge Beef or strawberry shortcake from the orchard, eat lunch, visit the farm market, and plenty more!
- **Community Open House** – Again on Saturday, **June 3**, 2023, from 10:00am to 2:00pm, the Bowmansville Fire Company's Station 33 (146 West Maple Grove Road, Bowmansville) will hold their community open house. In addition to tours and demonstrations, you can learn hands-free CPR for free.
- **Waterfalls of the Eastern United States** – On Thursday, **June 8**, 2023, 6:00pm to 7:30pm, photographer William Dryden Milheim will be at the Eastern Lancaster County Library (11 Chestnut Drive New Holland) to display some of his best waterfall photographs and discuss them in an informal setting with refreshments.
- **Family Backyard Bash and Movie Night** – On Friday, **June 9**, 2023, from 6:30pm to 9:00pm, the Garden Spot Village Pavilion and Lawn (433 South Kinzer Avenue, New Holland) will host a gathering with plenty of family-friendly activities, and a movie at sunset (so bring blankets and lawn chairs). A free-will offering will be taken up to support GSV's Travel with Purpose Team, who in September will be working with Missions of Hope International to serve impoverished families in Nairobi, Kenya.
- **Benefit Auction** – On Saturday, **June 10**, 2023, from 7:00am to 3:00pm, Lighthouse Vocational Services (144 Orlan Road, New Holland) will hold their thirtieth annual auction, benefiting their ministry of serving people with intellectual disabilities. There will be food (BBQ, fries, ice cream), a candy drop, and plenty of things to bid on (flowers, power tools, furniture, sheds, hunting equipment, etc.).
- **Bowmansville Park Family Fun Day** – Also on Saturday, **June 10**, 2023, from 10:00am to 8:00pm, there will be a free community event at Bowmansville Park (155 Church Street, Narvon), featuring wagon rides, pony rides, a bounce house, free food from noon to 6:00pm, and three evening musical acts: the Tony Gochnauer Band at 5:30pm, Christian metal/rock band Chaotic Resemblance at 6:00pm, and Christian rock band Behold the Beloved at 7:00pm. The event as a whole is sponsored by Flowing Waters Ministries, which helps people suffering with addiction issues in the Bowmansville area.
- **Music in the Grove** – On Sunday evenings throughout the summer, St. John Center Lutheran Church (599 Reading Road, East Earl) will again host their Music in the Grove concert series. Concession stand opens at 5:00pm, with programs from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Performers in June will be Tim and Kim Craven (**June 11**), TruVintage Gospel Bluegrass (**June 18**), and Crow Hill (**June 25**). Bring a lawn chair.
- **Morgantown Carnival** – From Tuesday, **June 13**, through Saturday, **June 17**, 2023, the Caernarvon Friendship Park (3287 North Street, Morgantown) will be the site of the ninth annual Morgantown Carnival, 6:00pm to 10:00pm each weekday night, 5:00pm to 10:00pm on Saturday. Look for nightly entertainment by Vuja De (6/13), the Jeff Krick Duo / Elvis Tribute Artists (6/14), Fat Mez (6/15), Triple Rail Turn (6/16), and the Jess Zimmerman Band (6/17), with fireworks at 9:45pm on Friday and Saturday nights. Plus, there will be rides and dozens of local vendors (including food trucks, coffee shops, etc., etc.).
- **I-105 Showdown in the Park** – On Friday, **June 23**, 2023, from 6:00pm to 9:00pm, local country bands will compete at New Holland Community Memorial Park (400 East Jackson Street, New Holland) to win a spot in I 105 WIOV's Fallfest line-up (for October 6). The music is free; just bring blankets and/or lawn chairs!
- **Arts and Crafts Show** – On Saturday, **June 24**, 2023, from 9:00am to 2:00pm, the annual Arts and Crafts Show will take place at New Holland Community Memorial Park (400 East Jackson Street, New Holland). Food vendors will serve breakfast and lunch. Crafters will sell homemade or repurposed crafts.

(Continued from Page 9, "Upcoming Community Events")

- **Men's Ensemble Concert** – On Sunday, **June 25**, 2023, from 7:00pm to 8:00pm, the Garden Spot Village Chapel (433 South Kinzer Avenue, New Holland) will host The Grateful Voices, an 8-man *a cappella* gospel music ensemble, for a free concert, though a free-will offering will be taken.
- **Community Meal** – On Monday, **June 26**, 2023, from 5:30pm to 6:30pm, CrossNet Ministries will provide a free community meal at their youth center (110 West Franklin Street, New Holland).

(Continued from Page 7, "Strangers, Sacrifices, and Sides")

Finally – at least in the portion we're looking at this month – there's this curious blurb in Numbers 15:17-21 to clarify the laws on firstfruits. The first of Israel's 'dough,' or 'baking,' belongs to God. Most firstfruits-type offerings were about the unprocessed produce of the harvest (*"the best of the firstfruits of your ground"* [Exodus 23:19], or *"the firstfruits of all fruit of every tree"* [Nehemiah 10:35]). Occasionally, Israel was called on to offer something that they'd processed (e.g., *"the firstfruits... of your oil"* [Deuteronomy 18:4] – you press the olives to get the oil). But here, God is talking about something that's double-processed: the grain must first be transformed into flour (*"a contribution from the threshing floor"* [Numbers 15:20]), and then turned into dough or bread through a second stage of transformation. Once Israel is free to so transform grains that sprout from the promised land, God asks them for *"some of the first of your dough"* (Numbers 15:21), which counts as a special sort of firstfruits (cf. Leviticus 23:17).

Okay, I can already hear you asking: "What does this have to do with us?" Maybe more than you think. So let's try to figure it out. What might God want *us* to learn from this strange chapter of Numbers?

First, that God's faithfulness to his promises can't be thwarted. All of these words are effectively meaningless jabber if God won't prove to be who he's committed himself to be. Individuals can choose to miss out on the promise (like Palti ben Raphu, the scout representing the Tribe of Benjamin [Numbers 13:9], who died by plague for instigating the sin of Israel [Numbers 14:37-38]). Nearly whole generations can miss out on the promise (Numbers 14:21-23). But that's a problem on their end, not on God's end. *God is still faithful*. And it's God's faithfulness that guarantees that Israel – some version of Israel not yet formed when God gives these laws – will enjoy what God has promised.

And just so, it's true that the Church has seen its share of ups and downs. God has promised great things to Christ's Church. Contrary to what some have taught, individual believers can and do *"fall away from the living God"* (Hebrews 3:12). It's even possible that there will be some times and places where large numbers, even majorities, of believers fall away. The local or regional or national church is not guaranteed to exist in a given place forever. But *God is still faithful*, and that faithfulness guarantees victory to the Church so completely that God can take it as a given in everything else he says to us. He speaks to us matter-of-factly on the premise of his promise!

Second, from Numbers 15, we can learn the importance of the orderliness of worship. In this chapter, we see that, even when the topic is totally voluntary offerings, God has standards for how he is to be worshipped. God is not shy about legislating what he's looking for, for reasons of his own. A lot of times, when it comes to our worship services – (to say nothing of our private devotions!) – we tend to default to pragmatism and individual taste. Why do we sing this way or that way? "Because I like it!" or "Because it's easiest!" or "Because it feels good!" or "Because it works out well that way!" But is that the picture Numbers 15 paints of worship? Instead, this chapter breathes with the spirit of *"When you offer..., you shall offer with..."* – "When you offer your devotion, *I want you* to do it this way."

I'm sure that, to the Israelites, these curious ratios of flour and oil and wine didn't always make sense. And I'm sure it wasn't convenient, when already giving up, say, a ram, to have to go all-or-nothing by adding these extra things. "Why can't God just be happy I'm giving him even a little token of thanks? Why does he have to have standards for it as well?" No doubt there were people who felt that way then, as they do today! And yet, God spoke to the *qahal* of Israel, the 'worship assembly.' And, in case we'd tend to dismiss that as an outdated Old Testament thing, consider that everywhere you see the word 'church' in your Bible, the New Testament has *ekklesia*... which is one of the main ways Greek-speaking Jews translated *qahal*. What God says to Israel's 'assembly,' he says to the church! So what if we humbly let God, and not our tastes or pragmatic wisdom, be the architect of our worship now as then?

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Third, think about *what* God asked Israel to give him alongside their sacrifices once they'd settled in the land: flour, oil, and wine. In the kingdom of God, there could be no valid sacrificial worship that cut itself off from the flour, the oil, and the wine. And in the same way that oiled flour and wine *had to play their role* in even the voluntary worship of Israel's sacrifices, they foreshadow something essential to the Church's worship, too.

From the very beginning, Christians looked back on the Last Supper as instituting the New Testament sacrifice: the Eucharist, or Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ. And how did Jesus command for his communion to be celebrated? With double-processed stuff. It wasn't just sheaves of wheat, and not even just oiled-up flour; he called for bread to be used. It wasn't just a bunch of grapes, and not even just grape juice; he called for wine to be used. (I know our custom is to use grape juice, not wine, when we share in Communion. Switching to mere grape juice is a modern innovation introduced just a couple centuries ago, for the sake of our loyalty to the Prohibition movement. But in so doing, we've changed what Christ set down. I admit I have misgivings whether that's a safe move!) Jesus himself – so the first Christians all believed – then took things a step even further. There'd be a triple transformation through his word recited over it: grain *to* flour *to* bread *to* Body of Christ; grape *to* juice *to* wine *to* Blood of Christ.

And from the very beginning, Christians recognized that this triple-processed offering was the necessary partner to what Jesus himself did on the cross. It was how they took part in it, how they received it into their own lives, how they joined themselves to it on earth – every Sunday. In Israel, there was no sacrifice of the lamb without the oiled flour and the wine; so in the Church, can we divorce the Sacrifice of the Lamb from the bread-become-body and the wine-become-blood? In Numbers 15, we see this profound glimpse into the meaning of sacrifice that shows us how Jesus would invite us to accompany his sacrifice. This is how the Church – how Christians – live in the sacrifice of the Lamb: through accompanying it with celebration of the bread-become-body and the wine-become-blood.

Fourth, and finally, Numbers 15 shows us how those foreign residents within Israel, the *gerim*, were invited to even approach the altar with their worship. And this, too, foreshadows some incredible New Testament truths. Already in the Law, God reminded Israel that, from his divine perspective, they themselves were simply *gerim* in his promised land, even after they'd settled there: "*You are strangers and sojourners with me*" (Leviticus 25:23; cf. 1 Chronicles 29:15). And so the prophets were free to dream of a day when *gerim* would be assigned a genuine share in the land inheritance of whichever Israelite tribe they lived with (Ezekiel 47:21-23). The trend was an increasing integration of the Gentile *gerim* into the Israelite inheritance that made the blessings of Abraham concretely manifest on earth.

In Romans 11, Paul digs deeper into these mysteries. The Church in his day, in every place it was settled, contained a continuing Jewish presence, like himself and the other apostles. And he compared this to the dough firstfruits from Numbers 15: "*If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump*" (Romans 11:16). In that seemingly irrelevant little passage, Paul found a promise of future hope! And yet, in the meantime, the welcoming of Gentile Christians into the Church was a true 'grafting in' to Israel, to "*now share in the root of richness*" on equal terms with the native-born Israelites (Romans 11:17). This, to St. Paul's mind, was made possible by the warning in Deuteronomy 28:43, where the unfaithfulness of native Israel would elevate the *gerim* among them higher and higher. Gentile Christians "*now have received mercy because of their disobedience*" (Romans 11:30).

All this was foreshadowed by the invitation in Numbers 15. No sooner would Israel fill their land than those who came in to live among them would find it possible to worship God on even terms. "*Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles,*" of the sojourning *gerim*, "*also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one – who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith*" (Romans 3:29-30). So, to those of us who were sojourners, *gerim*, looking in, it is only God's mercy and grace that are "*able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*" (Acts 20:32), "*an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you*" (1 Peter 1:4). Therefore, now "*you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*" (Ephesians 2:9)! And that does "*uphold the Law*" (Romans 3:31) that "*for the assembly,*" the *qahal*, the church, "*there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger,*" *ger*, "*who sojourns with you,*" to "*be alike before the LORD*" (Numbers 15:15) – thanks be to God!

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National Conference Digest 2023

Wednesday, May 24

National Conference began at 1pm in the Hostetter Chapel with singing, the reading of the Word, and prayer. The message was given by Bishop Emeritus Mike Sigman, who challenged us with the question, "Do you love the church?" Bishop Randy Sizemore led the entire Conference in sharing the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Following the service of Holy Communion, the National Conference commenced the business session at Brubaker Auditorium and cared for the introductory items necessary to open the business sessions.

Officers' reports were shared. Rev. Brad Hatter gave the National Conference Secretary's report. Then, the National Conference Treasurer's report was presented by Mr. Carl Butler, Jr. saying that investments are down, but ministry fund income is up.

The Episcopacy Committee's report was given by the chairman, Rev. Keith Blank, sharing that the committee seeks to provide confidential support to the bishop. Then, Bishop Randy Sizemore gave the Conference Network Team's report with thanksgiving to those who are a part of the team. Kevin Henry presented the Conference Support Team's report, welcoming Wendy Beard and Bethany White as staff.

Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner came to the podium and gave the Church Health Commission's report. A spiritually healthy church is made up of spiritually healthy people. Loving God and loving others are the best ways to build healthy churches that engage in the great commission by making disciples. Healthy churches become lifelong learners, applying what they are learning and obeying Jesus' commands, bringing transformation. After Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner's report was completed, Bishop Randy Sizemore and National Conference gave thanks for his years of service in the Church Health Community.

The Finance Committee report was given by Mr. Carl Butler and Executive Director Kevin Henry. Ministry fund rate will remain at 5.65%. The Conference Report had individual items that were adopted by the National Conference. The COLA was encouraged for pastoral compensation increases.

Stationing Elder ballots were cast for the Great Lakes Region and the Delaware Region. The Great Lakes Region elected Rev. Robert Dunbar. The Delaware Region elected Rev. Nathanael Kennedy and Rev. Charles Walker.

Following dinner, inspiring worship was led by Rev. Bruce Sellers after which Bishop Randy Sizemore gave the Episcopal address. The EC Church vision was emphasized that we will be a dynamic movement of God which flows from our heritage and the heart of God to reach the lost. This begins with a burning passion for God, involving practical strategies that fit and flourish with churches that plant more churches than those that close. In this, we must not forget that we are evangelical. This truth must be personal, that we are a missional church as a vision that is believed by all of us. Fulfilling this vision will call us to break camp and get our feet wet, fulfilling the vision to be a dynamic movement of God.

After the conclusion of the Episcopal address, there was a time of refreshments and fellowship with a heart of unity among the conference.

Thursday, May 25

On Thursday morning, National Conference continued with inspiring worship in singing by Chris Lehigh and a message on having love for the lost by Dr. Tim Roehl.

The business items for Thursday began with the report for the Benefits Corporation by Rev. Ryan Taylor and Executive Director Kevin Henry. Rev. Frank Schock was elected for the open Pastoral representative on the Benefits Corporation. The retirement benefits for pastors have changed to Nationwide, and all pastors were encouraged to set up their online account and beneficiaries as soon as possible.

Proposed rule changes were addressed and approved as presented by the Finance Committee, Stationing Elder Committee and the Ministerial Development Community.

Following the morning break, Rev. Ted Rathman gave the Global Ministry Community's presentation with a flag processional onto the conference floor. Following this processional, the conference was blessed to hear the beautiful voices of the Yoriyoshi Abe family from

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Japan. Also during the presentation, greetings and thanksgiving were shared via video by international conference leaders. Delegates then joined hands and prayed.

There were two resolutions made that were presented by Executive Director Kevin Henry. The closures of Rosedale Community Church and Union Salem Church were approved.

After the conference took a break for lunch, there were two equipping experiences. The first was equipping healthy leaders by Dr. Tim Roehl who spoke on "Avoiding the Moses Syndrome." The second was equipping healthy churches by Rev. Gary Keuhner, who had the conference work on a healthy church checkup survey. After the equipping sessions, each district met to debrief.

The National Conference came back after dinner for another inspirational time of singing and worship through the Word. Dr. Tim Roehl gave another message that focused on the theme of "Marks of a Kingdom Church," reminding us that we are called to be missionaries to our communities. Following this message, the Kingdom Extension Community presentation by Rev. Michael Snedeker was given. The members of the National Conference stood up, representing that they believe that the EC Church can be a dynamic movement of God. We were challenged to believe that God can do great things in the next ten years and to do what we can to help accomplish those things for God as disciples who make disciples. The evening concluded with prayer.

Friday, May 26

Following a time of worship, Rev. Matthew Hill shared the Ministerial Development Community presentation. The Ministerial Development Community seeks to equip people called by God to reach people in their own communities as a dynamic movement of God. This equipping includes four building blocks to help make that happen. The first building block is our Pastoral Assessment Center. The second building block is ICL. The third building block is our Board of Examiners. The fourth building block is pastoral health. These four blocks help to make up what our Ministerial Development Community is about.

The National Conference continued with the

credentialing report.

The questions for applicants were charged to: David Brezina, Richard Fischl, Thaddaeus Hughes, Kevin Kumher and Brandon Segan.

In closed session, the following statuses were approved:

Itinerant Elder: Robert Valentine, Michael Coulson, Jared Yordy; **Ordained Elder:** Richard Fischl, Kevin Kumher; **Ordained as a Deacon:** Lawrence Bentz, Barry Heckman; **Local Pastor:** Michael Lewis; **Approved Pastor:** Thaddaeus Hughes; **Licensed Candidate Status:** David Brezina, Brandon Segan; **Superannuation Status:** Dennis Brubacher, Jeffrey Byerly, Timothy Christman, Kurtis Graff, Kenneth Kalisz, Dale Kramer, Kenneth Miller, Richard Nahodil and Robert Santucci.

The annual renewals of credentials, notifications of transfer and notifications of removal were granted.

The Conference concluded with the Memorial Report and recognition of retirees. The retirees recognized were Dennis Brubacher, Jeffrey Byerly, Timothy Christman, Kurtis Graff, Kenneth Kalisz, Dale Kramer, Kenneth Miller, Richard Nahodil and Robert Santucci.

The 2023 National Conference adjourned by singing together *Wonderful Grace of Jesus* followed by prayer.

EPISCOPAL ADDRESS 2023

Hope overflows to cast a vision.

Greetings in the name that is above every other name, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Last year I stood before you as your newly elected Bishop with a story about Humpty Dumpty and God's eternal promise of overflowing hope from Romans 15:13. After one year in office I am happy to report that I see a growing hope, fostered by God's Holy Spirit in our National Conference. I will freely admit that measuring hope is a challenging proposition. A portion of this growing hope is expressed in tangible, observable ways and other portions of this growing hope are felt in the heart and soul and expressed in our worship services, leadership gatherings and individual conversations. However it is measured, it is on this foundation of hope that we are determined to grow as a dynamic movement of God.

Our vision is to become a dynamic movement of God.

As I was searching for a way to communicate what I believe to be the passion and direction of God for the EC Church, I found myself drawn to our Vision Statement which captures the direction God is placing in my heart for our Church. Listen again to the slightly shortened version of our Vision Statement:

The Evangelical Congregational Church will be a dynamic movement of God led by pastors and laity who have a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost. We will creatively obey the Great Commission by transforming plateaued and declining churches into healthy, disciple-making churches that are committed to evangelizing the communities to which God has called them. Healthy churches will reproduce themselves by planting churches in least-reached communities.

This vision is rooted in our history and heritage.

The challenge with vision statements is that we often put them in notebooks labeled, "strategic planning" and we place them on our websites under headings like, "who we are", and we print them in our publications as colorful graphics, as if somehow this is where they were born, this is where they live and yes, this is where they die. The vision statement of the Evangelical Congregational Church did not germinate from a committee of creative minds as a cleverly crafted way of describing a one-hundred-year-old church. This vision germinates from the heart of God in His revealed Word and flows from our history and heritage as far back as the conversion of the Wesley brothers in 1738, the Great Awakening and the 1740 revivals up and down the east coast of America through evangelistic campaigns. It grows from what is sometimes called the Second Great Awakening some fifty years later that reached into a small corner of eastern Pennsylvania to capture the heart of a farmer and tile maker named Jacob Albright who after experiencing the evangelistic preaching of Anton Houtz at his own childrens' funeral went back to his brick kiln and cried out to God for mercy and salvation.

This glorious salvation began to grow in Albright as a burning passion for God. Jacob's thirst for God and his Word grew through personal conversations with men like Adam Riegel, a United Brethren lay minister and through organized Methodist class meetings led by Isaac Davies. The book, Evangelical From The Beginning describes Albright's passion. "A new Jacob Albright was emerging like wheat from buried grain; a man of prayer, a student of the Word, zealous to speak, not eloquently, but lovingly about his Jesus" (p.29).

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Albright's burning passion for God led to his missionary zeal to reach his lost neighbors, as a circuit riding evangelistic preacher and the founder of a dynamic movement that even after his early death in 1808 continued through his young co-laborers in this new America, still recovering from the Revolutionary War. History documents that our early Evangelical preachers followed the move of the frontier people into the wilderness to build the Kingdom even as they built our nation. By 1816, Albright's people had grown from a single man's burning passion for God and missionary zeal for the lost to a dynamic movement active in five states. As much as I would love to continue sharing our exciting history, I will leave it there. My point is this, the Vision Statement of the Evangelical Congregational Church flows from our history and heritage, it is who we are, and more importantly, it flows from the heart of our Heavenly Father who so loves the world that he sends his Son Jesus, not to condemn the world but to save the world through him. And so we boldly declare,

The Evangelical Congregational Church will be a dynamic movement of God led by pastors and laity who have a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost. We will creatively obey the Great Commission by transforming plateaued and declining churches into healthy, disciple-making churches that are committed to evangelizing the communities to which God has called them. Healthy churches will reproduce themselves by planting churches in least-reached communities.

This is a comprehensive vision.

Let's examine how this Vision Statement guides and directs us as a dynamic movement of God. As the graphic below portrays, a dynamic movement must include forward progression.



A dynamic movement of God must begin with burning passion for God. A burning passion for God leads to a missionary zeal for the lost. As Jesus teaches us in the Great Commandment, we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). Just like in Albright's day, as we share Jesus with our neighbors and the lost are saved, we invite them into local expressions of the Church. Contextualized healthy congregations where together we are disciplined to live out Jesus' teachings, multiplying ourselves as we share the Good News and plant new congregations who repeat the vision. This is our vision not because it sounds good from the pulpit or looks good in our publications, this is our vision because it flows from the very heart of God our Father.

This is who we are and the direction we have set as the Evangelical Congregational Church. As your Bishop I am committed to leading us in organizing ourselves, stewarding our resources and implementing the strategies of this vision to grow the Evangelical Congregational Church as a dynamic movement of God. This is an encompassing vision which will require an intentional commitment of our time, talent, and treasure. I encourage you to familiarize yourself and your congregation with this vision statement because this will be our road map, our way forward, our GPS for the long foreseeable future.

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This vision begins with a burning passion for God.

For our time together during these sessions of our National Conference gathering, I want to focus on the first sentence of our vision, *The Evangelical Congregational Church will be a dynamic movement of God led by pastors and laity who have a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost.*

A burning passion for God does not flow from a conference theme, a strategic planning committee or any other human source. A burning passion for God flows from God himself. During the last few months, we have witnessed an outpouring of God's Holy Spirit across our country upon those willing to position themselves through confession, humility, repentance, and surrender to receive an awakening, a renewal, a revival, a burning passion for God. Like God's people camped by the Jordan River in Joshua 3, we too must be willing to trust God enough to break camp and follow Him through the obstacles before us into a new land where he promises to do amazing things among us! Breaking camp, leaving the places where we have been living a little too comfortably is upsetting and many are unwilling to consider such a bold move. However, as I have been saying for the past three months, the difference between a settlement and a movement is the number of God's people willing to break camp and follow him.

Pastors, lay delegates, church leaders, are you willing to break camp, to pull up the stakes of your dwelling, to get your spiritual, physical and emotional stuff together? Are you willing to allow God's Holy Spirit to evaluate those things you have been holding onto and carrying around unnecessarily? What would we say to Joshua's people who wanted to hold tightly to their cloth tents and meager earthly belongings, rather than giving them up to inherit houses they did not build and vineyards they did not plant and wells they did not dig. What would we say if they would rather live in their current less-than-perfect reality than to break camp, consecrate themselves and follow their God who promised to do amazing things among them? What would those who are watching us in 2023 say if we are not willing to break camp and follow God?

This is where we must begin. While this burning passion for God must come from God, we are not helpless, nor should we be sitting idly by waiting for it to happen. We must take every opportunity to position ourselves as denominational leaders, pastors, lay leaders and the people of God to receive this renewed passion through God's Holy Spirit. This is indeed the practical fulfillment of the overflowing hope promised in Romans 15:13! To this end I have charged the Prayer Mobilization Team to lead us in a conference-wide prayer strategy that will keep us centered in and on the only One who can awaken and renew. I challenge you pastors and lay leaders to join Carla and me in prayer and fasting asking our Father to move within the EC Church, filling us with a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost.

This vision of passion involves practical strategies.

Movements are fueled by passion and facilitated by practical strategies. Therefore, I am challenging our conference Communities, Teams, Associates, District Field Directors, committees, congregations and pastors to ask the strategic question, "How does what we do help us become a dynamic movement of God?"

Our Conference Support Team led by Executive Director Kevin Henry has taken my challenge seriously and we have added two staff positions at Church Center, an Administrative Receptionist, and a Communications Coordinator to facilitate the mission of the conference and serve our local congregations. We welcome Bethany White and Wendy Beard to the Church Center team! I also want to thank Dee Jaramillo for her over-and-above service to both the National Conference and the Global Ministries Community over the past year while we were filling these two positions. Dee is now serving exclusively as the Deputy Director of the Global Ministries Community. I also would like to publicly thank Dave King who recently retired from serving as our Benefits Administrator. Bethany and Kevin are picking up his duties but no one will be able to replace Dave's "dad jokes" or should I say bad jokes? From updating

software to reducing the amount of printing, postage and handling paper, we continue to strive for that healthy balance of maximum service at minimal cost, keeping Ministry Fund percentages as low as possible so that more resources are available for local ministry initiatives. Well done Kevin Henry and Church Center staff!

The Conference Network Team, which includes the Associates giving leadership to our Church Health, Kingdom Extension, Global Ministries, Ministerial Development and Missional Alignment Communities are also strategically evaluating the members, committees and scope of their communities repositioning themselves to facilitate the vision of becoming a dynamic movement of God. At this conference you will enjoy presentations from the Church Health, Global Ministries, Kingdom Extension and Ministerial Development Communities and hear first-hand how they are helping us become a dynamic movement of God. As a vital part of the Conference Network Team and the connecting point of a burning passion for God and the practical work of the local church, our District Field Directors continue to serve the pastors and people in their districts with excellence educating, encouraging, and equipping them to know Christ and to make him known. On behalf of all of us as the Evangelical Congregational Church I want to express gratitude, appreciation, and thanksgiving for the tireless efforts of our Associates and District Field Directors who are on the front lines of our mission!

This is a vision of fit and flourish.

If you're reading anything church related you know that the number and average size of local churches in the United States is declining. Most of the churches in the U.S. are averaging below 100 in weekly attendance. The EC Church is no exception. Approximately 89% of our churches averaged below 100 people in worship on any given week. Now please hear me clearly: the decreasing size of churches in the U.S. is not necessarily a bad thing, **IF** we plant more of these right-sized gatherings of believers who are willing to missionally contextualize the Gospel for the communities they are called to reach. I believe the future of the Church in the United States will require a multiplication of both larger and smaller, or "right-sized" congregations with full time and co-vocational pastors who will invest a larger portion of their budgets into ministry rather than maintenance. This strategy is laid out clearly in our own Vision Statement. God in his grace has positioned us to flourish in this new landscape as his Church! Of course, along with birthing new churches we recognize the life cycle of other congregations will come to an end. Our goal must be to birth more new congregations than those we say "good-bye" to.

Critical to carrying out this right-size-church multiplication strategy is the challenge of pairing pastors and congregations. In this increasingly non-traditional culture of doing church, traditional models of stationing pastors do not always work. The Stationing Elders and I are committed to creatively working with churches and pastors, trusting God to provide guidance in stationing assignments that fit and flourish pastor, congregation, and community for mission and ministry. As a dynamic movement we will need God to raise up more pastors. These pastors, like the pioneering pastors of our heritage, will most likely need to be co-vocational and will need to be evangelistic and will need to be missionally motivated to share the gospel of Christ in their local communities through the contextualized ministries of the local congregation. It goes without saying that we will need biblically sound and contextually expedient methods of training the pioneering pastors we seek. I am working closely with Rev. Matt Hill, Ministerial Development Associate and the Ministerial Development Community to evaluate how we recruit, assess, train, and credential those men God calls to pastoral ministry in the EC Church. We are committed to implementing the changes needed to supply our dynamic movement with biblically sound, culturally aware, and missionally motivated pioneering pastors who embrace our evangelical heritage and passion. As H.M. Stanford wrote in our 1910 denominational publication, *The Evangelical*, "It should never be forgotten that we are essentially an evangelistic church, and if the day should ever come when we cease to be such, then there would be no longer any reason for us to exist as a church".

This must be a personal vision.

Visions cannot be borrowed and returned like local library books. Visions must be bought by those willing to pay the cost, visions must be brought home and broken in, visions must be studied, underlined, outlined, and lived with until they show signs of being well-handled and well-loved. I believe God's vision for the EC Church has become my vision, but in all honesty if it never becomes your vision, it will make little difference. Carla and I have been praying and fasting that God would fill our pastors and people with this vision. Our heritage is full of individuals who personally bought the vision. Listen to this description of your spiritual ancestors from the book, *Evangelical From The Beginning*.

"The early Evangelical Association did not have a missionary society; it was in fact, nothing else but a missionary society, and all its ministers were missionaries. Early conferences sent out up to one-third of their members to form new circuits in new counties and states, and as Evangelicals moved west, circuit-riding preachers followed. Sometimes laypeople formed classes and asked the nearest Annual Conference for a preacher. Sometimes preachers tracked down Evangelicals who had moved out of the church's territory. Sometimes preachers rode from cabin to cabin making appointments to preach on their next time around the circuit, and the people called their neighbors together for this opportunity to hear a preacher" (p. 47-48).

Go back with me many more years to Joshua chapter three. You know the story as well as I do. God's people have been delivered from Egypt under Moses. They have wandered in the wilderness for forty years and now stand before the flood-swollen violent waters of the Jordan River challenged to trust God to get them across that river, following a new leader named Joshua. Invited to engage the enemies and obstacles of the Promised Land, called to be his people in his position for his purpose. There are so many lessons and applications for our personal lives and congregational lives here that I would love to share, and I will if you invite me to come and preach at your church. At this moment, I want to explore the application for us, the pastors and lay leaders of the Evangelical Congregational Church and our desire to be a dynamic movement of God with a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost. I will condense my application to three points since apparently that's what all good Evangelical preachers do.

How do we realize this vision?

First, realizing the vision of what God wants us to be in the future begins by believing what God is saying now – even when we cannot see it! God is asking Joshua's dog-tired, discouraged and dismayed people to look beyond where they are (in the wilderness), beyond what they have (not much), and beyond what's in front of them (insurmountable obstacles and enemies), to what they cannot see. They are being asked to believe God that a flooded river will suddenly stand up in a heap, that the many and mighty armies of the new land will flee before them, that they will enjoy the blessing, success and presence of God in their lives as never before. They are being asked to believe that God will use them in ways they could never imagine as a dynamic movement to accomplish his plans for his world. Realizing the vision God has for us in the future requires we believe God for that vision right now!

Secondly, believing God right now for a future of becoming a dynamic movement requires that like Joshua's people we are willing to break camp. When the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant of God went before the people, they were instructed to break camp and follow God to a new land, a new life, a new vision. Breaking camp is hard work. Breaking camp is about pulling up stakes, leaving the known behind. Breaking camp is about getting our spiritual, physical and emotional stuff together. Breaking camp often involves confession of favored sin, reconciliation with God and fellow believers, surrender of pride and the need to be in control. Breaking camp requires us to keep our focus on God in unity with our leaders and those who are also following God. Do not underestimate the

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importance of focus. We are currently witnessing the unprecedented division and destruction of denominations and congregations that could be dynamic movements of God but are not because they have lost their focus on God's mission. They have abandoned God's Word, God's ways, and their gospel heritage. They are insisting others follow them instead of God as they forge their own way across the river. We in the EC Church are not immune to such temptation to lose focus. As your Bishop, you need to know that I consider keeping us focused on God's vision my main priority.

Finally, breaking camp to follow God as a dynamic movement requires a willingness to get our feet wet. In Joshua chapter three the plan of God for crossing the river was announced. Nothing changed. The people broke camp. Nothing changed. The priests picked up the Ark of the Covenant and began walking. Nothing changed. The priests' feet touched the water. Everything changed! Need I say more? Pastors, lay leaders, people of God in the EC Church, are you willing to engage in the vision of being a dynamic movement? How is God asking you to get your feet wet with Him? The difference between a settlement and a movement is the number of people who are willing to get their feet wet, the number of people willing to engage in the vision. As Jacob Albright predicted before his death in 1808, "men will appear among you who will be able to accomplish that which I shall not be able to do. It is the work of God, and it is in His hands, He will provide for it."

Conclusion

Here we stand, as it were, on the banks of the Jordan, the people of Albright who throughout our journey have been blessed by God's faithful presence and provision. He has given us visionary leaders committed to his Word and his ways. He has formed us into a spiritual family of brothers and sisters with a common identity in Christ that flows from our shared history and heritage. He has successfully brought us to this point in our journey with him and is now inviting us to believe him for much, much more as we enter a new land of obstacles, opportunity, and promise. A dynamic movement of God led by pastors and lay leaders who have a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost. If you listen closely, you can just begin to hear it – the sound of a wet-footed church on the move, following their King!

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Randy Sizemore
Bishop

Whether Jew or Gentile, we confess that we're all "*strangers and exiles on the earth*" (Hebrews 11:13). But just like Israel delayed in the desert, we have God's unthwartable promise that those who stand fast by faith will inherit their promised land – a heavenly country. And there, for all eternity, we will – one and all – offer ourselves up to God the Father in sinlessly perfect union with Christ our God, and eternally be received in the bliss of beatitude which is God himself. And this is what all those sacrificial laws joyously point to! Jesus, in eternally presenting his human life to God, will not do so without us onto whom his anointing has spilled, who *become* flour and oil and wine in him!

Preaching Calendar (June – July 2023)

Worship services commence at 10:00 AM on Sundays. We hope to see you there with us!

- June 4 (Pentecost 1 / Trinity Sunday):** Sermon Title: “An Eternal Prelude”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-2 + John 1:1-2
“Glory Be to God on High” (196)
“O God, Our Help in Ages Past” (39)
- June 11 (Pentecost 2):** Sermon Title: “Deus Creator Omnium”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1 + John 1:1-3
“Almighty God, Thy Powerful Word” (insert)
“Let All That Breathe Jehovah Praise” (insert)
- June 18 (Pentecost 3):** Sermon Title: “Abyss and Inspiration”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-2
“O Breath of Life” (190)
“Spirit of God, That Moved of Old” (insert)
- June 25 (Pentecost 4):** Sermon Title: “The Light Shines in the Darkness”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-5 + John 1:1-5
“O Splendor of God's Glory Bright” (20)
“The Whole World Was Lost” (261)
- July 2 (Pentecost 5):** Sermon Title: “Sky and Sea and Soil”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-10
“Formless and Void Creation Stood” (insert)
“Eternal Wisdom, Thee We Praise” (insert)
- July 9 (Pentecost 6):**
(Communion Sunday) Sermon Title: “Communion for the Cosmos”
Scripture Reading: John 1:9; 3:21; 6:32-33, 48-51
“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” (114)
“For the Beauty of the Earth” (insert)
- July 16 (Pentecost 7):** Sermon Title: “God and His Great Green Thumb”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:8-13
“God from His Cloudy Cistern Pours” (insert)
“Arise All Things That God Has Made” (insert – vv. 1-3, 8)
- July 23 (Pentecost 8):** Sermon Title: “All These Shining Orbs”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:14-19
“The Spacious Firmament on High” (46)
“Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens, Adore Him” (4)
- July 30 (Pentecost 9):** Sermon Title: “The Life Aquatic”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:20-23
“God of the Seas, Thy Thund'ring Voice” (insert)
“The Pious Fisherman's Hymn” (insert)
- August 6 (Pentecost 10):** Sermon Title: “The Birds Their Carols Raise”
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:20-23
“All Things Bright and Beautiful” (42)
“This is My Father's World” (50)

Quotes for Thought

“We ourselves, after being persuaded by the Word, recoiled from demons and follow the only unbegotten God through the Son. Of old, we rejoiced in promiscuity; but now, we embrace only temperance. Then, we practiced magical arts; but now, we have dedicated ourselves to the good and unbegotten God. Then, we loved above everything the means of acquiring money and property; now, we put to common use even what we have, and share with everyone in need. Then, we hated one another and murdered one another and, because of custom, would not even live under the same roof as those who were not of the same race; now, after the appearing of Christ, we eat at the same table, and we pray for our enemies and try to persuade those who unjustly hate, so that those who have lived according to the good counsels of Christ might have a good hope with us of obtaining the same things from the God who is Ruler of All.”

– St. Justin Martyr

I Apology 14.1-3 (c. AD 155), in Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies (Oxford University Press, 2009), 113

“See how Christ esteems humility! Christ, the Son of God, is not recognized in the temple, but he is proclaimed in the desert. The humble Christ loves the humble.”

– St. Jerome of Stridon

Homily 87 (c. AD 400), in Fathers of the Church: A New Translation 57:213

“It is fitting that the Christian is loved, for he gladdens God and his Christ with all his righteous deeds. ... It is fitting that the Christian is cared for and guarded by the angels, who attack and destroy the enemy who fights against him. ... It is fitting that the Christian is beloved among the angels, for he brings into the storehouses of his soul the dew which is sweet and comes down from the heaven of heavens; it is sweeter than any honey.”

– Shenoute of Atripe

As I Sat on a Mountain (c. AD 440), in The Cambridge Edition of Early Christian Writings (Cambridge U.P., 2017), 2:192

“As long as we continue in this life as children of the eternal promise, we are separated from one another in time and space, but in heaven there is a homeland in which its citizens, being gathered from the four winds of heaven, are forever joined together in an indivisible fellowship.”

– St. Bede the Venerable

On the Tabernacle 2.2 (c. AD 725), in Translated Texts for Historians 18:53

“We owe a greater debt to the soul than to the body ... Act, then, with an eye not to the punishment which men can inflict, but to the reward which follows from fearing God...”

– Pope St. Gregory VII

Letter 45, to Robert of Flanders (c. AD 1082), in The Epistolae Vagantes of Pope Gregory VII (Oxford U.P., 1972), 111

“Blessed be the unfailing mercy of God's providence, which never fails the hope of those who rely upon it and which confers joy and consolation upon those engaged in the work of salvation, all the more when fearful dangers appear to threaten them.”

– Adam Marsh

Letter 52, to Robert Grosseteste, dated 3 June 1250, in The Letters of Adam Marsh (Oxford University Press, 2006), 1:145

“Stand fast by simple faith! Look unto Jesus! Trust him, praise him forever. Lean upon him alone! ... You have faith, hold it fast. You have love, let it not go. Above all, you have Christ! Christ is yours! He is your Lord, your love, your all! Let him be your portion in time and in eternity!”

– John Wesley

Letter to Jane Esther Lee, dated 7 June 1762, in The Works of John Wesley 27:295

“We cannot be Christians without a burning desire to make known to all people the blessed story of the saving power of Jesus Christ. If he means so much to us, and we feel that all who do not have him will be found wanting in that day, then it is our duty to help others find him who never heard of him. And how can they know unless they be taught? And how can they be taught unless someone will go to them?”

– Norman N. Lower

“A Call to Foreign Missionary Service,” sermon first preached 3 October 1919, in EC Church Archives, Myerstown

PRAYER GUIDE

- *We praise God* for all the wondrous blessings he's given us, most notably the ministry of his Son (in death, resurrection, and exaltation to the Father's right hand) and the gift of his Holy Spirit; and *we pray* that God would glorify his name above all else and would bring his kingdom more fully to earth.
- *We pray for our denomination, our congregation, and the church universal*, that God would bless us at all levels with faithfulness, wisdom, vision, and fortitude to earnestly labor in his vineyard.
 - *We pray particularly for* our pastor **Rev. Jonathan J. Brown** and for **our church board**.
 - *We pray also for* **our Evangelical Congregational Church leadership**: our bishop **Randy Sizemore**, executive director **Kevin Henry**, and district field director **Keith Miller**; the **Global Ministries Community** under **Ted Rathman**; the **Kingdom Extension Community** under **Mike Snedeker**; the **Church Health Community** under **Gary Kuehner**; the **Missional Alignment Community** under **Bishop Randy Sizemore**; and the **Ministerial Development Community** under **Matthew Hill**.
- *We pray for our missionary partners* (such as **Dan Quigley** and others), that God would keep them safe and faithful, would focus their efforts on God's work, and would grant success in accordance with his holy will.
- *We pray for other churches and pastors in our community*, that God would keep all congregations united in one holy faith and devoted to the ardent service of one and the same kingdom and of its King, Jesus.
- *We pray for the salvation of our whole community and its maturation in Christian discipleship*, knowing that there is hope in Jesus for all people and for entire communities to reflect the righteous love of God.
- *We pray for an end to coronavirus* and to **other current disease outbreaks** (e.g., mpox, Marburg, cholera).
- *We pray for an easing to the economic suffering around the world*, especially due to the inflation surge.
- *We pray for those suffering in the wake of other disasters here and around the world*, that God would provide comfort and resources so that they might rebuild.
 - *We pray for* those afflicted by natural disasters such as the Asian heatwave; famine (especially in South Sudan); drought; wildfires, especially in Canada; the dust storm in Illinois; Cyclone Mocha in southeast Asia; flooding in Rwanda, Uganda, Italy, and Congo; landslides in Congo; the avalanche in Pakistan; earthquakes in China, Japan, New Caledonia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Myanmar; and more.
 - *We pray for* those afflicted by accidents such as bus/truck accidents in Egypt, Mexico, Slovakia, China, and India; the multi-car crash in Turkey; the helicopter crash in Afghanistan; plane crashes in India and California; boat accidents in India, Italy, and Alaska; building collapses in Thailand and Iowa; the bridge collapse in Finland; the crane collapse in Taiwan; fires in Malaysia, Czech Republic, Peru, New Zealand, Guyana, Russia, Austria, Texas, and North Carolina; explosions in China and Iran; and more.
- *We pray also for those victimized by violence and social ills, especially the Russian invasion of Ukraine*, that the God of all comfort would make his presence manifest to the injured, traumatized, and grieving.
 - *We pray additionally for* those afflicted by the Uyghur genocide in China; ongoing warfare in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and Central African Republic; Israel-Palestine, India-Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan, and Armenia-Azerbaijan conflicts; insurgency in Egypt, Iraq, Colombia, Chad, Cameroon, Congo, the Maghreb, Nigeria, Niger, India, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Indonesia, Mozambique, Pakistan, South Sudan, Turkey, Myanmar, Iran, Iraq, and Libya; the Mexican drug war; the gang war in Haiti; kidnappings in Mexico; mass shootings in Pakistan, Serbia, Tunisia (at a synagogue), Germany, Mexico, France, Japan, Texas, New Mexico, Georgia, and Florida; the mass stabbing in Poland; bombings in Bulgaria, Syria, and Pakistan; the possible vehicle-ramming attack in Texas; arson in Germany; attacks on farms in Benin and Burkina Faso; attacks on villages in Nigeria and Cameroon; attacks on churches, especially in India; the American opioid epidemic; human rights violations such as abortion and human trafficking; and the migrant/refugee crisis.
- *We pray for* all who serve and protect us, including **civic leaders, police, firefighters, medical responders, and members of the military**: May God keep them safe, just, wise, sincere, humble, and accountable as they administer justice, guard against chaos, prevent harm, and defend the vulnerable.
- *We pray for our nation and its government* at all levels and in all branches, that God would move our leaders to repent of unjust or unmerciful practices and laws; that God would crown them with wisdom, security, peace, and civility toward all; and that God would give them godly hearts to live and govern rightly.

PRAYER GUIDE (Continued)

- ***We pray for the persecutors and maligners of the church around the world:***
 - *We pray for* the conversion of terrorists and other people of violence into disciples of the Prince of Peace.
 - *We pray for* the wisdom of God to be made manifest to skeptics and critics.
 - *We pray for* the Spirit's boldness to fill the hearts of all believers to witness to Jesus in life and in death.
- ***We pray for the families and friends of many who have entered their rest in the past year:***
 - For the family of **Richard Taylor**, who entered rest on June 3, 2022.
 - For the family of **Timothy Lingg** (Tory's brother), who entered rest on June 28, 2022.
 - For the family of **Janet Martin** (John Eberly's niece), who entered rest on July 27, 2022.
 - For the family of **Shirley Jacobs** (Ken Bannon's cousin), who entered rest on August 10, 2022.
 - For the family of **George Hilton Jr.** (Stephanie Bills' brother), who entered rest on August 11, 2022.
 - For the family of **Marian Rissler** (Dave's sister-in-law), who entered rest on September 1, 2022.
 - For the family of **Linda Kohl** (Clair's wife, Del's sister-in-law), who entered rest on September 3, 2022.
 - For the family of **Erma Martin** (Shirley Good's friend), who entered rest on September 24, 2022.
 - For the family of **Sharon Brubaker** (Skip's cousin/Grace's niece), who entered rest September 24, 2022.
 - For the family of **Norbert Sedelbauer** (Ruth Snader's uncle), who entered rest on October 5, 2022.
 - For the family of **Bonnie Mogle** (Anita Boley's neighbor), who entered rest on October 9, 2022.
 - For the family of **Jean Adams** (Sharon Horst's mother), who entered rest on October 14, 2022.
 - For the family of **Gary Sedelbauer** (Ruth Snader's cousin), who entered rest on October 26, 2022.
 - For the family of **Roy Sweigart** (Kim's father-in-law), who entered rest on November 16, 2022.
 - For the family of **Ginger Goudie** (the Hesses' friend Jim's wife), who entered rest November 28, 2022.
 - For the family of **Patricia Dietz** (Bob Dietz's wife), who entered rest on December 3, 2022.
 - For the family of **Bob Dietz**, who entered rest on December 4, 2022.
 - For the family of **Earl Pickel**, who entered rest on December 19, 2022.
 - For the family of **David Hurst**, who entered rest on December 22, 2022.
 - For the family of **Letty Clark**, who entered rest on December 25, 2022.
 - For the family of **Bob Forrey**, who entered rest on January 5, 2023.
 - For the family of **Paul Bauman** (Joyce Good's brother), who entered rest on January 6, 2023.
 - For the family of **June Harter** (Sue Eshelman's mother), who entered rest on January 24, 2023.
 - For the family of **Darlene Young**, who entered rest on February 1, 2023.
 - For the family of **Mike Diem**, who entered rest on February 8, 2023.
 - For the family of **Alvin Wise** (Jean Hess' uncle), who entered rest on February 22, 2023.
 - For the family of **Grace Sprecher** (Sharon Mast's aunt), who entered rest on February 22, 2023.
 - For the family of **Herman Martin**, who entered rest on February 25, 2023.
 - For the family of **Leon Hartranft**, who entered rest on March 11, 2023.
 - For the family of **Amanda Hoffert**, who entered rest on March 11, 2023.
 - For the family of **Lois Gift**, who entered rest on March 20, 2023.
 - For the family of **William Riegel** (Del's brother-in-law), who entered rest on March 27, 2023.
 - For the family of **Darryl Imler** (Leroy Stoltzfus' nephew), who entered rest on April 1, 2023.
 - For the family of **Glenn Weber**, who entered rest on April 4, 2023.
 - For the family of **Clarence Jones** (Floyd Mast's uncle), who entered rest on April 11, 2023.
 - For the family of **Linda Wonder** (Sharon Mast's stepmother), who entered rest on April 27, 2023.
 - For the family of **John Herr** (Abby Eberly's friend), who entered rest on April 29, 2023.
 - For the family of **Sherry Stoltzfus** (Esther's sister-in-law's mother), who entered rest on May 4, 2023.
 - For the family of **Jim Brubaker**, who entered rest on May 5, 2023.
 - May the Lord give immeasurable peace, strength, and comfort to all who face loss and grief.
- ***We pray for all dementia sufferers and for their caretakers***, that God would lighten burdens, restore clarity to injured minds, and speak directly to hearts and souls with his comfort, his peace, and the light of grace.

PRAYER GUIDE (Continued)

- *We pray for all those suffering from cancer* – (including Randy Vandill, Cindy Ebersole, Donna and Brandy Rhodes [Cindy Ruth's sister-in-law and nephew], Troy Frey, Lisa Mast, Lori Zimmerman, Pat Street [Nancy Mountz's sister], Betty Kennedy [Del Ream's niece-in-law], Adrienne Hedges [Brenna Pammer's friend], Earl Martin [Miriam Rissler's brother-in-law], Doris Snader, Rev. Marlin Lafferty, Rev. Don Wert, etc.) – that God would shield them from pain, restore their bodies, comfort them, and bless their doctors.
- *We pray for the other assorted health concerns (and other needs) of:*
 - Ray, Delores, and Ruth Snader + Bobby Snader (Bob and Ruth's son) + Carol Briggs (Ruth's sister)
 - John Good (Earl's brother) + David Good + Dave Embry Jr. (Shirley Good's niece's husband)
 - Floyd Mast + Steven Mast (Floyd's son) + Cindy Bannon + Marilyn Wilson (Cindy's mother)
 - Delores Jaxel + Clair Kohl + Jeff Kohl + Henry Kohl + Shawn and Candace Sweigart
 - Earl and Pauline Good + Jen Swanson (Earl and Pauline's granddaughter)
 - Cherri Snader + Lawrence Groff + Jim Becker + Don Pickle + Dot Yohn
 - Mary Andrews + Raymond Bannon + Emma Shirk (Ken Bannon's aunt)
 - Debbie Diem (Sharon Mast's sister) + Tom Schwer (Sharon's stepbrother)
 - Barty Messner + Shannon Messner + Shirley Riggins (Deb Messner's mother)
 - Abby Eberly + Linda Sweitzer (Abby's friend) + Lindsay Ringler (Abby's granddaughter)
 - Cyrus Kendig (Sharon Mast's grandson) + Connie Dieter (Leon and Jean Hess's daughter)
 - Larsen Houck (Shirley Good's great-grandson) + Kayley Smith (the Hesses' granddaughter)
 - Kathryn Shirk (Jean Hess's aunt) + Sonya Shirey (Jean's friend)
 - Veanna Baxter + Julia Reed (Veanna's sister) + Shirley Buchanan
 - Ray Arment + Mary Skiba (Sally's cousin) + Emily Sensenig
 - Ken Styer + Lucy Weber + Bret Hoffert + Jethro Hursh
 - Jeremy Kurman + Warren Weinhold + Jody Freeman
 - Jess Pennepacker + Charles Yingst + Ralph Mountz
 - Carl and Grace Nolt + Vera Kochel + Carl Martin
 - Floyd Heuyard + Butch Haas + Dennis Wanner
 - Robert and Barbara Sparr + Rodger Whittaker
 - Elizabeth Zimmerman (John Eberly's sister)
 - Dorothy Long (Sharon Mast's boss's sister)
 - Violet Stauffer + Paul Ford + Loretta Reed
 - Jerry Felpel and Doris Getz
 - Dawn Acevedo (Cindy Hoffer's sister)
 - Troy Frey and both of his parents + Tory Lingg
 - Donna Sensenig + Larry Sensenig + Daryll Sensenig
 - Matthew Huntington (Brenna Pammer's brother-in-law)
 - Clarence Bauman (Joyce Good's brother) + Minerva Hufford
 - Lorraine Burkholder (Shirley Good's daughter) + Linda Burkholder
 - Linda Talbot (Cindy Ruth's sister) + Albert Rhodes (Cindy's brother)
 - Rodney Rhodes (Cindy Ruth's cousin) + Cathy Bullock (Cindy's neighbor)
 - Rebecca Lucas (the Walkers' family friend) + Rebecca Horst + Dillon Dewire
 - Barb Kern + Linda Ebert (Barb Kern's friend) + the Bowman family (Barb's cousins)
- *We pray for other neighbors, friends, and believers in need*, that God would heal, provide, and comfort.
- *We pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit* upon our church, our community, our county, our nation, the Evangelical Congregational Church, and the church universal. *We pray for the whole church to be filled with a spiritual zeal for worship, evangelism, and discipleship. May the fires of revival fall!*
- *We praise God for all the prayers we've seen him answer and for his everlasting faithfulness!*